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ABSTRACT

This report examines the current state of community colleges in South Africa. A pilot study was designed to assess the state of thinking, practice, partnership, possibilities, programming, restructuring, and needs with regards to South African community colleges. Preliminary findings suggest that, where community colleges do exist, there is a strong sense that they represent powerful community, social and human resources development nodes that could promote the realization of FTE ideals as stated in government policy. At the same time, however, a number of capacity needs have also been identified in the community colleges subsystem, ranging from governance and management needs, program development needs, quality assurance and accreditation needs, to partnerships requiring urgent attention. This report is divided into three parts. Part 1 provides the framework, the basic issues in FTE, perspectives and ideas on community colleges, and other concepts that guided researchers' thinking as they prepared to undertake this phase of the research. Part 2 contains the basic findings from site visits to 9 colleges and from the survey questionnaires returned from 30 colleges. Part 3 contains conclusions and recommendations for action at the research and policy levels. (JA)

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Towards an Inclusive and Vibrant Further Education and Training

PHASE ONE REPORT

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Community Colleges in South Africa

Towards an Inclusive and Vibrant Further Education and Training

Phase One Report

Community Colleges in South Africa

Towards an Inclusive and Vibrant Further Education and Training

Phase One Report

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RESEARCH ON FET POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

A project of the
Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)
Group: Education

In collaboration with:
The National Department of Education

The National Institute for Community Education (NICE) *and*

The Government of the Netherlands

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October 1999

Foreword

South Africa's current human resources development needs are extensive and complex. They range from the fulfilment of personal needs on the one hand to the promotion of socio-economic growth and development on the other, and the two are inextricably linked.

According to the 1999 World Competitiveness Yearbook, South Africa is ranked 38th out of 47 countries in terms of its general levels of development and competitiveness. Much of the backlog is attributed to the underdevelopment of the country's human resources. Although South Africa's standing has improved slightly in the past four years, the country is still far from achieving a performance level that will ensure its successful participation in the world economic system.

At a fundamental level, there is a critical need to enhance the individual South African's capacity for self-realization and empowerment. This is the essential ingredient for greater social well-being, which will in turn make the country more productive and better equipped to compete globally the daunting challenge facing South Africa in this and the next decades of the 21st century.

If this challenge is not taken up purposefully through a comprehensive policy implementation strategy, South will remain on the margins of the global economy. Part of the challenge is to identify and remedy weak areas within the broad education and training delivery system so as to ensure proper institutional response to the varied needs of learners.

Arguably, one such weak area in the education and training delivery system is the community colleges subsystem, which is less developed than the other subsystems in the post-secondary education and training sector (i.e. universities, technikons and

technical colleges). The community colleges subsystem has an important role to play in this sector and in fact already does so in some instances. By their nature, community colleges are often closely attuned to community needs and can therefore readily meet the needs of a sizable number of learners.

Since 1998 the Human Sciences Research Council has been involved in a two-phase study on community colleges the broad purpose of which is "to conduct research on the interaction between policy formulation and policy implementation".

The first phase (which has just been completed) was a pilot study designed to assess the state of thinking, practice, partnership possibilities, programming, restructuring and needs with regard to community colleges in the country. The preliminary findings suggest that, where community colleges do exist, there is a strong sense that they represent powerful community, social and human resources development nodes that could promote the realization of FET ideals as stated in government policy. At the same time, however, a number of capacity needs have also been identified in the community colleges subsystem, ranging from governance and management needs, programme development needs, quality assurance and accreditation needs, to partnerships requiring urgent attention.

The contribution the community colleges subsystem can make to the human resources development strategy will, in large measure, depend on the effectiveness of the interface between policy formulation and policy implementation mechanisms. Phase II of the study which is about to be completed will give us a clearer picture of the way forward.

Mokubung Nkomo President:
HSRC 20 June 2000

Preface

Central to the reconstruction of South Africa's education systems into a single, equitable and affordable system, are the issues of structure, administration and governance. Several interest groups, departments and development agencies have been exploring options in this regard. However, much of the work to date considers these issues only from a central perspective, identifying institutional and local levels of administration and governance as a by-product of decentralization and devolution policies.

Thus it is both interesting and constructive to welcome an input to this debate which considers the issues from an entirely different point of view. Within the overall objective of monitoring FET policy implementation over the coming two to three years, this study was initiated by the HSRC. It aimed at conducting action research into the ongoing community college pilot projects in South Africa, which are undertaken by the governments in the different provinces in order to provide analytical and other data needed for effective implementation of this component of FET policy.

The study offers an unprecedented insight into how the incumbent systems, at institutional level, view prospects for change. It is important to note that the study reflects a specific point of view. Although it has in itself no official standing, it has substantial value in that it is the only input into the debate that conveys an accurate picture of the resources of the institutions concerned. The views advanced by the study on how these resources can be rationalized and/or restructured should be seen as just another topic for discussion, albeit a valuable one based upon wide experience of the present systems. Any debate dealing with education in South Africa will have to take cognizance of the contents of this study.

The study is also unique in as much as it abandons the safe ground of weighing abstract policy options, and instead tackles issues as being confronted at the local level. This information will provide a basis for debate and hopefully encourage wider discussions outside the establishment.

The study is unique in that it considers what may be most appropriate for the institutions and their localities, set within the context of a single

national system and department. It is here, perhaps, that the study is most valuable because it bases its illustrative approach on a bottom-up set of needs and services. Always bearing in mind the primary requirement of equalizing education provision to all learners, the study provides insight into needs at grassroots level by translating these into resource requirements and backlog issues. In this respect it is a building block - how it fits, or even whether it fits at all, is now the subject for debate at national and provincial level - after all, the study raises issues and options that are by no means unique to only one set of institutions. In the final analysis, each of South Africa's institutions, irrespective of how they are ultimately structured, will face the same challenges. The study therefore has the potential to enrich the national debate and offer both insights and solutions that could impact on every level of the future FET system.

It is important to note that the impetus for the development of this study originated in the HSRC with the support of the Royal Netherlands Embassy, the National Department of Education (FET, Youth/Community College Pilot Project Unit) and the National Institute for Community Education (NICE). All these partners are committed to facilitating change through communication and cooperation. The partnership in this respect, although not claiming authority or a mandate, seeks to encourage a rational approach to reconstructing education and training, and to addressing issues of equity, access and affordability for all the learners in our country.

The initiative taken with this study may seem to some interest groups and stakeholders in education as presumptuous and running parallel with nationally agreed frameworks for education. It is however the contention of the partners that without such inputs the national debate will be the poorer for a lack of appreciation of issues at institutional level. For this reason we enter these findings into the debate in the sincere hope that in some way they will help open discussion on issues of real concern to the institutions that are grappling with change on a daily basis.

Our thanks are due to the members of the partnership, the researchers, the people who were interviewed, those who contributed to the study in a variety of ways and for their commitment and their preparedness to think beyond the confines of their historical involvement. We believe that the issues raised by the study will enrich the national debate and will promote the FET implementation in South Africa.

Mokaba Mokgatle
CEO - National Institute for Community Education

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Introduction

Within the overall objective of monitoring FET policy implementation in South Africa, this HSRC-initiated study conducted action research into the ongoing community college pilots being undertaken by the government in the different provinces. The idea was to obtain analytical and other data needed for the holistic implementation of the FET policy.

Phase One of the study (1998-1999) sought to establish the state of thinking, practice, partnerships, reprogramming and restructuring in the community college pilots, and to identify the basic needs of the institutions engaged in the pilots. This report, combining qualitative and survey results, presents the findings of that phase. Phase Two (1999-2000) will focus on issues arising from this report and will attempt to reveal the dynamics and tensions of policy implementation at the local level through ethnographic research. A process and developmental objective of the study was to strengthen the partnership between the different actors in support of policy implementation in general; and to develop capacity for action research (R&D) within the HSRC.

The partners in this research initiative are the National Department of Education, which saw the research as contributing information to the unfolding operationalization of FET policy; the National Institute for Community Education (NICE), which continues to be a key national institution that is both advocate and support base for the community colleges idea; and the Netherlands Government, which has been a principal co-funder for the research.

As a bilateral partner of the Government of South Africa, the Netherlands Government has extensive programmes that can support the policies of educational transformation in South

Africa, within which FET is recognized for its unique location not only as a transition point between general education, higher education and the world of work, but also as a factor in broadening access to learning at post-school level. It is a critical point for skills development in the context of poverty alleviation as well as economic development. It is within this framework that the issue of increased access to FET by the disadvantaged populations of South Africa assumes special significance in that it brings together the streams of *relevance* and *redress* in improving the quality of life of the affected people.

Research provides crucial feedback that can be used in further policy development and planning as well as in facilitating critical reflection on policy implementation. The Netherlands Government regards research as an important factor in policy implementation in South Africa.

From a research perspective, a major focus area of the HSRC is to conduct research on the interaction between policy formulation and policy implementation. Within such a framework, this study creates opportunities to conduct research in the FET sector on a national level, to monitor intra- and interprovincial implementation strategies, and to interact with action at community college level. Research into the FET sector, which can inform policy formulation and implementation, also echoes the mission of the HSRC: to facilitate problem solving and enhance decision making. The Group: Education of the HSRC has also conducted various studies in the FET field encompassing the rationalization of teacher-training colleges, feasibility studies on competency-based technical training, and the audit of technical colleges in KwaZulu-Natal. An action research approach was chosen primarily because action research unites thinking and doing, or theory and practice. Moreover, solutions derived from action research are tested by acting on them to see whether they produce the consequences they imply.[1]

Against this background, survey questionnaires were sent out to the pilot sites, and a total of nine sites were visited by researchers for interview purposes. It should be noted that although the total number of colleges undergoing piloting was initially given as 61, ongoing changes and restructuring at provincial level in effect

meant that some of the institutions had either been closed down or had undergone further restructuring and were no longer part of the pilots. At the same time, some new sites had also come on board. Survey questionnaires were sent to a total of 50 community colleges, of which 30 colleges completed and returned the survey instruments. Qualitative responses were derived through interviews with principals, staff and learner representatives at nine selected colleges around the country. The sites visited were two in the Northern Province, twp in the Eastern Cape, two in the Northern Cape, one in North West, one in the Free State, and the National Access Consortium in the Western Cape.

This report is divided into three parts. **Part One** provides the framework, that is, the basic issues in FET, perspectives and ideas on community colleges, and other concepts that guided our thinking as we prepared to undertake this phase of the research. **Part Two** contains the basic findings from the site visits to the nine colleges and from the survey questionnaires returned from the 30 colleges. **Part Three** contains conclusions and recommendations for action at the research and policy levels.

PART ONE: Background and framework

1.1 Education and Training in the post-apartheid dispensation[2]

Post-apartheid South Africa requires a profound social, political and economic transformation. The very epistemology of apartheid[2] needs to be challenged using all available methods and means. From the perspective of human development, it can be said that apartheid had a stunting effect at the two levels of human development: the *formation* of human capabilities (through the creation of structural mechanisms to physically and mentally deprive black people of the means and opportunities to attain their potentialities), and the *use people make* of those acquired capabilities (by controlling the access to and the criteria for entering employment and the job market in general).[3]

Redress at the level of *formation* of human capabilities should therefore entail not just creating access to educational institutions, but also empowering individuals and communities to appropriate reality and thereby utilize the access opportunities more effectively. Redress at the level of the *use people make* of the acquired capabilities can be achieved through various legislative mechanisms as well as regulation of the workplace to ensure that not only access, but the effective utilization of those skills and capabilities is ensured, including the paying of specific attention to residual structural deterrents in institutional arrangements that represent obstacles to such participation.

For many in South Africa, the double discrimination through material deprivation and 'official' disqualification from participating in the countries political landscape, implies that what is needed now, apart from the general needs of the economy, is a retrieval of suppressed moral concerns within which social capital and social development can be fostered holistically.

In operational terms within FET, this requires applying conscious sensitivity to the needs of people living in disadvantaged circumstances by recognizing the link between FET and community empowerment/development issues. A comprehensive FET programme would strive to give equal and balanced attention to the unemployed (who do not even have institutional frameworks within which to begin to express their needs), as it would to those learners who have teachers at their disposal throughout the year in properly managed environments (i.e. the pre-employed).

A comprehensive FET system would not only help previously disadvantaged people increase their autonomy and their understanding of the power structures of working life, should they choose to go that path, but it would assist the advantaged to contend with the issues associated with oppressive traditions and the historical conditions of arbitrary power in which so many institutions have been steeped. From this perspective, all minimalist approaches to equity are inadequate, but such inadequacy becomes more apparent as old inequalities continue and/or are exacerbated. FET should therefore avoid falling into the trap of leaving matters of equity to the 'equity groups' or targeted populations and those who speak with and for them.[4] It requires overt and pro-active support from government not only with regard to norms and standards, but also in outlining requirements for new and requisite mindsets.

A comprehensive FET would also seriously consider strategies for fostering *creativity* in the manner in which institutions such as community colleges conduct their business. Some of this creativity might pertain to the formation of new and unprecedented strategic partnerships and collaboration in the endeavour to ensure effective delivery. Other forms of this creativity might pertain to the very perception of the relationship of the institution with the context and the accompanying implied responsibilities.

This is the more so because, on the one hand, the FET belt contains some of the most challenging systemic uncertainties, some of the most acute differentiations in terms of provision, and

is also the most vulnerable in terms of funding arrangements. On the other hand, it is a sector with the most promising terrain for innovations in terms of the school-work interface, institution-context challenges, new partnerships, and the new role of the state. Creativity must therefore be invoked and applied on an ongoing basis in implementing FET policy.

For its part, as custodian of the educational norms and standards, government will have to maintain its vigilance over the unfolding FET processes while it renews its strategies for providing support to provincial and college-level initiatives. It will have to develop further its capacity to monitor closely the implications of FET policy for quality education and for a centralized policing presence.

1.2 Gender

Like politics, economics and culture, education and training is also a gendered sphere. It is clear from numerous research and other life experiences that schools and the labour market are profoundly implicated in the regulation and enforcement of gender roles and in the production of gendered identities. They seldom promote the development of critical capacities to question the social, economic or patriarchal systems: rather they naturalize these conditions.

Although the issue of women's subordination has been articulated in various domains, the concept of gender, where there is an occasional reference to it, is not presented in a sufficiently detailed and elaborate manner either for pedagogical or for policy-making purposes. Thus in policy documents, although access is not denied to girls and opportunities are not denied to women to reach the same types of education and training as men, the question of curriculum content and the contextual pressures that bear on girls' and women's daily participation in learning are not dealt with. The rational consensus model on which many policies are premised represents a minimal departure from the *status quo*.[5]

Clear and consistent gender-typing still haunts education systems. Although both sexes believe that women should also have an economic role, the tendency to remain passively inclined towards linking women primarily with domestic-related work is commonplace. Compensatory policies and other powerful mechanisms to alter education and training practices, such as massive retraining of teachers in gender-sensitive practices, are avoided at the same time that schools are posited as neutral sites.

It is clear that any policies for redress (gender, race, class) require more than just legislative action. Such redress demands clear, pro-active, carefully desegregated strategies that are sensitive at all times to the existence of widely scattered sources of resistance to change. Lessons from international practice reveal repeatedly that if gender is treated as a management problem (i.e. in terms of numerical equality alone) without serious consideration of its implications for overall practice, it cannot be accorded the significance it needs as a tool and a strategy for overall societal change.

1.3 Public/private classification[6]

Many comparisons between the public and private school systems have been forced to adopt increasingly detailed classification systems,[7] distinguishing between schools that are *public* (in the sense of government owned and financed); *publicly owned but not fully government funded; aided private* (receive government subsidies); *unaided private; not-for-profit institutions*, and *for-profit* institutions. The debate in most parts of the world revolves around the balance between public and private education. A school or college may be public according to its mission/purpose or norms of management, but private in ownership, source of revenue or expenditure controls, and *vice versa*. Some people believe that education is essentially a private activity based primarily on public provision.[8] But this classification becomes more diffuse in South Africa where the role of the state is central in asserting norms and standards as well as in funding and in promulgating legislation, but where community

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involvement and participation in local level governance and fiscal support is openly sought.

It would appear therefore that FET policy implementation does entail the development of new cognitive tools and instruments, as well as the definition of new spaces, for mobilizing human and institutional agency to action.

1.4 Point of departure in FET policy

The research took as its point of departure the tenets of the constitutional and legislative provisions that have been enacted in South Africa. The *first* of these is the Constitution of the RSA (1996:13) which stipulates that everyone has the right to basic education and to further education and training (FET), which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.[9]

The *second* is the White Paper on Further Education and Training, in which the then Minister of Education, the Hon. S. M. Bengu, stressed that a well-developed FET sector in South Africa has a major contribution to make to the economic growth and development of the country. He noted that the FET sector is situated at the intersection of a wide range of government policies that are crucial to the construction of a new south African society, to the requirements of the new information-based economy, and to the promotion of personal and social development. These include macro-economic, industrial, labour market and human resource development policies underpinning the principles of lifelong learning, employability and increased productivity.[10]

A *third* point of departure, also derived from the White Paper, is that FET is an important allocator of life chances, and that it offers initial and second-chance opportunities to young people and adults. Accordingly, the purpose and mission of FET are to respond to the human resource needs of the country for personal, social, civic and economic development.[11] A *fourth* is that FET has a direct bearing on the transformation of the senior secondary school system, the current technical and community colleges, and the development of new, meaningful education and

training opportunities for young people outside formal education.[12]

A *fifth* point of departure is that FET will enable many young people to pursue their post-compulsory education, not in school, but in a FET institution where flexibility, programme diversity, facilities and support services can support an open learning environment.[13] A *sixth* is that FET policy brings together demand (labour) and supply (education) by providing a framework within which the suppliers of education and training respond to labour market needs. This complementarity should enable greater effectiveness in shaping the linkage between the country's economic and human resource development strategies.

A *seventh* is that when fully developed, the new FET should provide access to high-quality education and training to a diverse set of learners, including school-going young people, out-of-school youth, young adults, and the larger adult population. A successful FET system will provide diversified programmes offering knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that South Africans require as individuals and citizens, as lifelong learners, and as economically productive members of society. It will require new partnerships in order to facilitate, among other things, the sharing of labour market information, the provision of career guidance through market training needs, the building of links between training and job placement, and the sharing of information on tracer studies of graduates.[14]

The *eighth* factor relating to the interface between the national and the provincial levels is that because education (other than higher education) remains a concurrent national and provincial competence, control remains divided between the Ministry of Education and the provincial authorities. This is a complicating factor in the implementation of, among other things, norms and standards. The *final* factor is that there is no FET system at present but, rather, a series of fragmented arrangements which are a reflection of the institutions history and ad hoc policy responses.[15]

It is against this background that the community college pilots represent a potential innovation in the FET sector.

1.5 Assumptions about the link between research and policy

At the initiation of this study, a number of assumptions about the link between research and policy implementation guided the conceptualization of the research, among which can be listed the following:

- The implementation of policy in the FET sector, like other policies in the education or other ministries, represents subinnovations within a broader system of innovation and transformation in the country. What happens at micro-level impacts on the macro-level, and what goes on at the macro-level impacts on micro-level performances.
- The pressure for delivery on policy promises implies that policy implementation, on occasion, has to proceed in spite of a weak data or information base. This imperative for policy implementation to proceed without delay thus challenges directly the traditional attitude, posture and role of research, of researchers, and of research institutions vis-Á-vis the policy process, and demands a similarly 'rapid response' approach that can enable practitioners to have facts at hand as the policy conveyor belt moves on. It is this concert that constitutes the new partnership-in-action between research and policy.
- Research and its institutions have in themselves become flexible, dialogical, empirically grounded, and capable of communicating *intent* and *output* to policy practitioners. Pure research should now be complemented strongly by a monitoring component as a direct service to policy process. Such a component can provide, in a sustained manner, the information, analyses or research findings needed for effective policy implementation.

1.6 Views on the idea of community colleges from other contexts[16]

The post-compulsory sector of most education systems includes structures organized in association with the nation's formal

school system and other unique enterprises. Various names apply to the latter group of institutions signalling their multiple purposes, for example 'community colleges', 'junior colleges', 'regional' or 'district colleges', 'technical' or 'technological institutions'. 'Short cycle' is the term used in Europe to encompass the entire group of post-secondary schools that do not award baccalaureate degrees. From this starting point, the following can be said about community colleges as an idea, a practice and an institutional form:

- Although community colleges are diverse in terms of courses offered, funding and articulation with other education and training institutions, they are highly valued as *key instruments leading to economic growth.*[17] International debate emphasizes the vital role played by community colleges in satisfying the growing education and training needs in the further education and training sector.[18]
- Despite the fact that community colleges in this sector are pivotal, they are *engaged in a critical survival struggle.*
- A major strength of community colleges is their *responsiveness to changes* in society at large, which is attributable to their deep-rootedness in their communities – changes in their geographical and social environment consequently immediately affect them.[19]
- In post-apartheid South Africa, the debate surrounding the appropriateness of community colleges for South Africa falls within the larger context of *remaking the post-secondary system* and the broader society,[20] on the one hand, and attempts to *resolve the profound educational problems inherited from the prior era of apartheid* which may require the establishment of new institutional forms, on the other hand.
- Community colleges are also seen as a kind of *springboard* and *safety net* for the inevitable millions who will wish to move upwards as well as those who missed earlier opportunities and are ready to try anew.
- Community colleges are also perceived as *democracy's colleges*, underlining the fact that at the heart of the

'community college' is a set of ideas that are democratic in tone and substance. These ideas are humanistic, inclusive and flexible even as, increasingly, the community colleges have to contend with three simultaneous challenges:

1. workplace and technology-driven demands
2. their place in community and social development
3. the requirements for entry into higher education[21]

- Community colleges are thought to *balance different roles* that combine skills transfer, academic development, vocational training and community services.[22]
- They are meant to be people-driven institutions. As far back as 1994, the ANC stated that development was not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry. It was about active involvement and growing empowerment.[23]
- The establishment of community colleges, it is felt, should not be based on the availability of facilities, but should rather be the result of co-ordinated decisions on *better utilization of existing facilities*. In other words, the planning and co-ordination of the colleges should be closely related to the overall planning and co-ordination of post-compulsory education.[24]
- Furthermore, community colleges can benefit the communities they serve only when they are *physically* accessible. In addition, community colleges should preferably be established in the neighbourhood of higher education institutions (which could facilitate co-operation with these institutions).
- Community colleges are considered to be a *good potential model* for the realization of the vision of lifelong learning for adult learners, for implementing distance education to support independent autonomous learning, for realizing the goals of vertical and horizontal mobility, and for serving as potential sites in which the dichotomy between vocational and academic general-formative education can be confronted, and perhaps eliminated.[25]

Accordingly, at the core of the vision of the movement for the creation of community colleges in South Africa is

- an image of institutional arrangements capable of providing education and training to adults and youths not afforded such an opportunity in the traditional formal education system;
- an image of sites of learning that can assist those engaged in distance education but who do not have the requisite supportive infrastructure at the local level;
- a vision of adult and further education that is committed to redress and development by creating an alternative to the fragmented and inequality-producing systems of the past;
- a vision of a movement guided by the principle that the new institutional forms in the shape of community colleges should constitute an integral part of the future education system of South Africa, and should be anchored in the values of equity, democracy, effectiveness and development;
- a vision of colleges that need not necessarily be crafted from scratch, but can be attained by expanding the mission of present institutions and by careful rationalization in terms of programmes that can pre-empt unnecessary duplication of subjects and courses.[26]

1.7 Community College Pilots in SA

Community colleges are currently being piloted as part of an initiative of the National Department of Education. The pilots have been established in eight provinces (excluding Gauteng) and R48 million was earmarked for disbursement on the initiative in 1997-1998. The programme is being delivered through 61 sites (Table 1). However, due to contextual problems at the provincial level, some provinces have not begun piloting the community colleges idea as initially envisaged, but are concentrating instead on consolidating the requisite policy and legislative infrastructure first. This is the case in particular in the Free State where only one college is in operation among those originally listed as pilot sites.

According to the National Business Plan for the pilot projects, the initiative was conceived in 1996, and the development of

Table 1: Sites of community colleges in SA as submitted by the DoE

PROVINCE	SITES
Eastern Cape	10
Free State	11
Gauteng	4
KwaZulu-Natal	1
Mpumalanga	2
North West	6
Northern Province	10
Northern Cape	6
Western Cape	11
TOTAL	**61**

programmes in selected cases commenced only in late 1997. In the meantime a series of activities were scheduled to have begun, including orientation, training and project management programmes for provincial level managers as well as community college personnel.[27]

1.8 Organization and scope of field research

Survey questionnaires were sent to 50 community colleges, of which 30 colleges responded. The list of the colleges that filled in the questionnaires and returned them is given in the appendix.

Field visits were organized in the following provinces and colleges respectively:

Eastern Cape	2	- Lovedale Community College - Zwelethemba Community College
Northern Province	2	- Northern Province Community College - Bochum Community College
Free State	1	- Lere-La-Tshepe Community College Community College
Northern Cape	2	- Kimberley College - De Aar College
Western Cape	1	- National Access Consortium of the Western Cape

North West 1 - Tsholofelo Community College

Field testing of the instruments was conducted prior to the commencement of the research at the Funda Community College in Soweto, Johannesburg. The criteria for selection of the provinces were numerical, and the actual sites were selected in consultation with provincial managers. The interviews and the questionnaires covered the general profile of the colleges under the following headings: Staff and Learners; Governance and Management; Responsiveness; Quality Assurance; Institutional and Staff Development; Learners; Learning Programmes; Finance; and a SWOT analysis (a self-assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). The interview sessions were conducted with principals, teachers and learner representatives.

Underlying the whole exercise was a view of the community colleges as a potential innovation in FET. The aim of the research was to explicate and determine to what extent transformative potential could be gleaned from the community college idea, and to identify what practice could be instructive in the FET sector as a whole.

The establishing of the state of thinking, practice, partnerships, reprogramming and restructuring in the community college pilots took place within a framework of *formative* evaluation rather than *summative* or *judgmental* evaluation. The idea is to assist the actors at the different levels to describe and place what they are doing, and how they are handling the challenge of transformation and change.

PART TWO: The findings

2.1 General outlay of the community college pilots

From the nine sites that were visited, and the 30 questionnaires that were returned, it is clear that there is great diversity in the community college pilots in terms of focus, orientation and potential contribution to the implementation of FET policy. Given in particular the fact that the policy itself is at present 'running after action' but at the same time shaping the action as the policy unfolds, it is crucial that attempts to comprehend the numerous innovations and strategies that are emerging at the local level should be as thorough as possible.

Many unusual features characterize community colleges as FET delivery sites. The concept is relatively new in mainstream South Africa, with most of the community colleges emerging from combinations of circumstances such as institutional closures and amalgamations, with possible implications for retrenchments. The strategic creation of new institutional forms in response to the perceived needs of communities, and direct community intervention to take their destiny into their own hands and create an FET institution also led to the emergence of the colleges. Most of the community colleges present challenges and opportunities in their particular contexts.

The majority of the sites are based on one model or a combination of the following models:

- *Amalgamation model* – in which two previous technical or teacher-training colleges were merged through prior rationalization policies. Examples of this can be seen in the Kimberley College (Northern Cape), and the Northern Province Community College (NPCC – Northern Province).
- *Transformation model* – in which a previous type of college, for example a former teacher-training college, was changed

into a community college. This can be seen in the case of the Bochum Community College (Northern Province), the Lovedale College (Eastern Cape which, though not yet declared a community college, is already transforming itself along the lines of a community college), the Tere-La-Tshepe Community College (Free State), the Zwelethemba Community College (Eastern Cape), and the Tsholofelo Community College (North West Province – which transformed itself in dramatic fashion through community intervention into a fully fledged community college).

- *Consortium model* – in which a new institutional form emerged from strategic consultations that led to the creation of a centralized administration to facilitate the standardization of conditions of service for staff, strategic fund raising and investment in innovative programme development and curriculum design. This one model, the National Access Consortium of the Western Cape (NACWC), is unique, and its potential for strengthening the innovations being undertaken in the other two models (above) should be further explored. Although the consortium model does not in the first instance call itself a 'community college', its links with civil society organizations and the International Community College Organization; its involvement with the initiatives of the National Institute for Community Education (NICE); and its aims of achieving expanded delivery within an unfolding democracy, and obtaining redress for disadvantaged youths and adults through facilitating access and entry pathways to tertiary education, place it squarely within the community college idea.
- *Technical colleges* that did not call themselves 'community' colleges as such, but carried out highly innovative curricular activities in direct response to the real needs of the community.

Details of the findings are presented below.

2.2 Location of the Community Colleges

Although the community college pilots were found to straddle the urban, peri-urban and rural areas, the majority of the colleges constituting the pilot sites are situated in peri-urban and rural areas.

The sites visited during the research covered the full urban-rural spectrum. Thus an example of an *urban* site would be the National Access Consortium in the Western Cape and the De Aar Community College in the Northern Cape; while a *Peri-urban* site would be the Tsholofelo Community College in North West, the Zwelethemba Community College in the Eastern Cape, the Northern Province Community College in the Northern province, and the Kimberley College in the Northern Cape. An example of a *rural* site would be the Bochum Community College in the Northern Province and Lere-La-Tshepe Community College Community College in the Free State.

According to the National Institute of Community Education (NICE), 'millions of black adults and out-of-school youth still have little or no access to education and training . Most black adults, especially rural women, are illiterate.[28] It is to such people that the prospect of a community college brings new hope.

The spread of these colleges in peri-urban and rural areas places them in contexts in which they face the reality of life in communities on an on-going basis. At the same time, their very location in 'the eye of the storm' puts them in a precarious position infrastructurally, as it was precisely these areas that were targeted for impoverishment during the apartheid era. Access to the colleges ranges from trains and buses for the urban-based colleges, to taxis and by foot in the rural sites. It is also these historically disadvantaged areas trying to rise, as it were, from the structural violence of apartheid, which need the most support in terms of capacity building.

Clear signals are needed from the National Department of Education to give these colleges a sense of belonging, and an

affirmation that they are indeed contributing directly to the development of communities.

2.3 Relative age of the Colleges

Although some of the colleges (three out of the 30) were established before 1970, and another seven were set up between 1970 and 1993, the majority of the colleges were established after 1994. This is significant from the point of view of opportunities as well as capacity development needs.

Coming into being in the post-1994 dispensation implies entering into a more democratic South Africa and witnessing the crafting of ambitious policy frameworks. However, initiatives are being taken even when there is no telling what a new policy may contain. The vulnerability of innovations therefore becomes all the more dramatic as apprehensions as to their congruency with emerging frameworks grow and timely and context-specific responsiveness from the government becomes less than certain.

As they stand, many of the new community colleges came into being as a result of the amalgamation of two previously non-community colleges. In other words the new colleges came about as a result of structural, rather than content-based transformation. The content was to crystallize after the fact. Indeed, from the survey results, 50% of the respondent colleges indicated that they had been former technical colleges, while about 25% had been former teacher-training colleges. This implies challenges in vision building not only in the context of the new democratic dispensation and new policies, but also in the context of new practice.

2.4 Language

The majority of the community colleges use English as the medium of instruction (90%). Of the 30 colleges that responded to the questionnaire, only three used English as a second language, and another two used Afrikaans as a second language. One college used Tswana and another college Xhosa as second languages. Nearly two-thirds of the colleges appeared to be monolingual in terms of language of instruction. Only in the

Kimberley College in the Northern Cape was Afrikaans, English and Tswana used, with some classes conducted multi-lingually, and with lesson materials, tests and exams prepared bilingually (English and Afrikaans).

2.5 Community Colleges: the mission at local level

Responses to questions about the vision and mission of the community colleges were documented during the visits to the nine colleges. Although the interviews did not dwell on the 'before' and 'after' of the college missions, the missions and visions that could be gleaned reflected a commitment to a common innovative agenda revolving around flexibility, broadened access and, in most cases, responsiveness to local communities and the labour market (whether as self-employed persons or persons in search of formal employment).

In terms of the drafting of the mission statements, the majority were prepared as part of a consultative process that preceded the transformation of the colleges into their new forms as community colleges.

At the Northern Province Community College (NPCC), the mission statement was drafted by a task team that was set up to oversee the transformation of the two previous colleges into a community college. Workshops were held to refine the vision, and direct consultations took place with various stakeholders in the process before the vision was submitted to the NPCC Council for approval. It is in the process of being revised at present. The college mission statement aims at

- broadening access at the local level by providing quality education to the majority of learners;
- catering for and responding to community needs;
- combining theory and practice, and empowering learners;
- freedom in admission policy;
- making the community college a site for harnessing and developing partnerships for local and thereby national development.

The Lovedale Community College (Eastern Cape) developed its mission in collaboration with the college's governing council. The Kimberly College (Northern Cape) management is well informed about the required transformation to a community college and is dedicated to such transformation. The mission of the college is to

- ▷ contribute to the reconstruction and development of local communities and to produce workers learners who will help the economy grow; provide learning opportunities to people who have been denied access to education in the past by assisting them to succeed in the programmes they choose;
- ▷ help individuals acquire knowledge and skills for employment and survival in response to the changing needs of communities;
- ▷ co-operate and share resources with other institutions.

The Zwelethemba Community College (Eastern Cape) is thoroughly conversant with its new mission, which was drawn up by management and submitted for approval to the council. The consensus as to goals was as follows:

- provide quality education at minimum cost
- empower sectors of the community to gain skills for self-employment

Lere-La-Tshepe Community College Community College(Free State) is awaiting the appointment of a new council to oversee the formation of a 'mega' community college for the area that will comprise Lere-La-Tshepe Community College (ex-teachers college), Kwetlisong (ex-manpower training centre) and Itemoheleng (technical college). The new formation will impact on the college's present mission statement.

The Tsholofelo Community College's (North West) stated mission is to

- address the needs of the local community;
- improve the quality of life of the people by increasing their skills for self-employment;
- provide education for adults;

- provide learning opportunities to people who have been disadvantaged and denied access to education in the past;
- help disabled people and develop outreach programmes for people in squatter camps such as Freedom Park.

The Kimberley Community College (Northern Cape) mission statement is under revision at present. In the meantime, the mission statement pertaining to its previous identity as the former Moremogolo Technical College still hangs on the wall in the principal's office. The significance of this is not clear.

The NACWC's (Western Cape) mission is to establish a New Institutional Form (NIF) that will

- recognize the need for expanded delivery within an unfolding democracy;
- deliver education and training programmes that ensure redress and access to universities and technikons for historically disadvantaged youth and adults;
- create a nationally replicable model of education and training delivery based on 'decentred' linkages and partnerships with multiple institutions, but with a central core capable of linking with strategic policy developments at national level, and developing strategies for capacity building for the total network rather than piecemeal;
- through the NIF, foster holistic development of individuals as part of a strategy to transform society. The holistic development should encompass the world of work, quality higher education, and quality career and vocational education and training;
- in terms of content, develop a learner-centred model, develop access pathways to higher education within the FET programmes, build the capacity of educators in the FET sector, and forge links with industry.

The NACWC's values include respecting the dignity of all people irrespective of race, gender or creed, adherence to democratic principles, and the cultivation of a spirit of excellence in a changing environment.

Although the Bochum Community College (Northern Province) does not have a formally stipulated vision, its guiding vision-in-practice is to

> provide education that is responsive and relevant to the needs of learners and the community;
>
> provide community-based education and training;
>
> provide quality education;
>
> promote education for self-employment and the labour market;
>
> promote college-community interactions.

The Zwelethemba Community College points out that the FET Green Paper and White Paper do not adequately address the issue of community colleges. However, the college believes that a community college ideally should be a 24-hour institution, which in practice means

- giving a second chance to people in different sectors of the community who were denied access to schooling;
- flexibility in curriculum organization;
- accessibility in order to admit learners based on local needs and not merely on formal schooling standards;
- community ownership, community empowerment and being community driven.

2.6 Responsiveness

Responsiveness was defined in terms of the needs of the community, the needs of industry, the needs of the informal sector, including the development of entrepreneurial skills and personal development. Some of the comments on 'responsiveness' will emerge in subsequent sections that deal with the organization of learning and the utilization of college facilities.

According to the returned questionnaires from 30 colleges, over 96% of the colleges considered themselves to be responding directly to community needs. In similar vein, all nine colleges visited during the research demonstrated an impressive record

of community responsiveness. College facilities are readily shared, and some colleges are preparing for stakeholder involvement in course organization. Fairs, exhibitions and public events are organized to bring the community and the college into constant interaction. A few examples will be cited here for illustrative purposes only.

Table 2: Responsiveness of Community Colleges to community needs (expressed in numbers and percentage of colleges responding)

Type of community need	Number & percentage of college responsiveness			
	Highly responsive	Somewhat responsive	Hardly responsive	Data not supplied
Needs of industry	(10) 33%	(14) 47%	(4) 13%	(2) 7%
Needs of the people in the community	(23) 76%	(6) 20%	(0) ——	(1) 3%
Needs of the informal sector	(10) 33%	(16) 53%	(2) 7%	(2) 7%
Needs of personal development	(10) 33%	(15) 50%	(5) 17%	(0) ——
Needs to develop entrepreneurial skills	(14) 47%	(12) 40%	(2) 7%	(2) 7%
Needs to develop small business	(14) 47%	(11) 36%	(5) 17%	(0) ——

In Kimberley, the perception is that the new community college is a 'college open to all'. The college recently supported the construction of a street market site for informal trading that includes learners' exhibitions as well as other community-produced items. As in the NPCC, there is a platoon system that makes provision for former trainees to work in college facilities after hours to launch private enterprises. A registered project with the municipal authority sponsored by the Swedish Government is using Kimberley College trainees to build 64 houses in the community. Local jobless and illiterate people are being trained in building skills by the college, and the building site is supervised by the college. The needlework/sewing centre trains unschooled adults from the community in basic needlework and garment making. Learners who take Computer

Science as a seventh subject in their senior secondary phase in neighbouring secondary schools do this at the college where computers are available.

In the Northern Province, the NPCC has adopted a programme for involving national and local businesses such as Iscor, Samanco, Telkom, etc. in interfacing training and the labour market. The college co-operates with the Department of Transport and the Department of Trade and Industry in developing training programmes in the food services, tourism and care industries. An 'entrepreneurs' day' has been organized to bring the business sector, the private sector and the micro-economy into contact with the college. The platoon system in the NPCC also makes provision for the community to use the college premises for direct community training in areas such as ABET, sewing and knitting. Over weekends the college premises are available for various community-initiated activities.

In Lovedale, the college has forged partnerships with businesses in Alice so that learners can be exposed to business practices and gain practical skills. Small business owners are invited to give coaching and mentoring to learners on how they can financially and administratively manage their own businesses. Unique to Lovedale, certified courses in music and dance are offered. Rural women also use the college for sewing, while the clothing production facilities in the college attract adults, workers and the unemployed from the community. Ten per cent of the profits they derive from making tracksuits, for example, go to the college coffers.

In De Aar (Northern Cape), community responsiveness at a practical level is seen in the sharing of the college's kitchen facilities with a neighbouring old-age home. Basic training skills in building and welding skills are offered directly to community members. Jobless people are gathered from the streets and given free skills in building or welding or any other available practical training.

However, hiccups do occur at sites such as the Zwelethemba Community College where the library facility is so small that it cannot accommodate extra users despite the fact that staff

firmly believe that such a facility should be more available to the public. There is also no full-time librarian even should the facility be available.

The NAC-Western Cape partnerships with the Western Cape Education Department, the Department of Labour, the Department of Correctional Services, industry and training boards, trade unions, civic society organizations and international funders testify to the extent of the responsiveness of the NACWC.

Lere-La-Tshepe Community College does not offer courses for the unemployed or training for self-employment.

All in all, the responsiveness of the colleges to the need for skills development in the informal sector (personal development, entrepreneurial skills and small business development skills indicate an awareness of the training niche in this area that can be supplied by community colleges. At the same time, the varied demands on the FET system call for diversity in provision. Such diversity as expressed within the college sector may imply a movement towards specialized institutions, focusing on a single industry or technology; OR it may imply a movement towards *comprehensive institutions*, such as community colleges, which address diverse needs in the locality of the colleges through the range of programmes they are able to offer.

Given that most of the colleges are located in non-privileged areas, and especially given that the National Department of Education's *National Strategy for FET* clearly indicates a move towards more rational and efficient use of available infrastructure, the latter possibility of the *comprehensive institution* model may become the most ready avenue for addressing the lingering issues of redress and community development, as well as personal development in concrete terms, and in *real time*.

This proposition is premised on empirical facts drawn from the survey of the training programmes offered by the colleges, which reveal that the community colleges provide a) courses that lead to articulation with higher education, b) access courses that prepare disadvantaged learners for advanced study, c) skills development for the informal sector, d) training for illiterate and unemployed community members, as well as e) the college

infrastructure for community entrepreneurial activities at a nominal cost.

2.7 Co-operation with other institutions

Co-operation with other institutions is a demonstration of efficiency in the utilization of available resources. It is also an indication of awareness of the need for community colleges to draw upon each other's strengths, while jointly reducing each other's weaknesses. Co-operation with other institutions also bodes well for the prospect of interventions in information technology – in that colleges that commonly work together could easily form a nucleus for Internet and other forms of IT connections to enhance learning.

The following table shows the relationship the community colleges have with other institutions in terms of sharing resources.

Table 3: Sharing resources with neighbouring institutions

TYPE OF SHARING	NUMBER OF COLLEGES (out of 30)
Share staff	7
Share programmes	13
Share workshops	13
Share information technology	9
Share equipment	13
Share sports facilities	17
Share other items	4
TOTAL	30

The interviews with the colleges reveal a similar pattern.

The Tsholofelo Community College in the North West Province has established partnerships with the Thlabane and Mogwase Colleges of Education, and the Rustenburg Technical College. It also has links with NICE, Eskom and Technikon SA.

Lere-La-Tshepe Community College has ties with Unisa, the University of the Free state, Vista university and an institution in Canada. On the local front, it collaborates the Itehemoheleng, Kwetlisong and Tshiya Colleges. Lere-La-Tshepe Community College is awaiting a decision to enable it to explore other forms of clustering with these institutions based on recommendations from research carried out by Dr J.L.Wydeman and Dr T. Magau of the HSRC in 1997.

The Zwelethemba Community College has established links with the University of Warwickshire in the UK. The college is also negotiating a merger with the Griffith Mxenge College, a possibility that has created some anxiety among members of staff. The college has expressed a strong need for a 'public relations' section or someone who can do full-time market research and public relations on behalf of the college. This issue was also alluded to by the NPCC when they expressed their anxiety about the vacuum in effective support from the national and provincial departments of education in respect of college needs for collaborations further afield, as well as collaborations within South Africa.

The NACWC partnership model consists of three core partners: Khanya College, LEAF College and the Access Programme of the Peninsula Technikon; 21 linkage partners (with a total of 1 519 learners) with the future possibility of a rural development strategy; eight provincial community college pilots; the Department of Correctional Services (30 prisons with a total of 1 729 learners) with further strategies to provide certification and the devising of NQF pilots; and seven technical colleges (aligning to NQF processes, and with a total of 250 learners) with further strategies for delivering in-service training, for programme development and for learner support services.

These partnerships encompass key business areas for the consortium. The NACWC has established contacts with institutions in New Zealand, and is itself receiving advice and training from external (Scottish) experts.

The Kimberley College co-operates with educational institutions in the area through various clustering arrangements and the

sharing of resources. It has established a distance/correspondence module for court interpreters in collaboration with Potchefstroom University. The Lovedale College has entered into agreements with the Border Technikon and is exploring ways of sharing resources. At the Bochum Community College, the idea of co-operation is still relatively undeveloped.

Table 4. Formal agreement schemes/proximity of contact

TYPE OF INSTITUTION IN CONTACT WITH Community Colleges	NUMBER & PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES			
	Formal agreement	Schemes of association	'Close' informal contact	Little contact
Schools	(7) 23%	(2) 6%	(8) 26%	(10) 33%
Community colleges	(3) 10%	(4) 13%	(8) 26%	(12) 40%
Technikons	(8) 26%	(3) 13%	(4) 13%	(12) 40%
Universities	(9) 30%	(2) 6%	(4) 13%	(12) 40%
Training institutions	(6) 20%	(4) 13%	(4) 13%	(12) 40%
Professional institutes	(5) 16%	(0) —	(6) 20%	(15) 50%
Education departments	(15) 50%	(2) 6%	(7) 23%	(1) 3%

Some of the colleges have taken steps to develop more formal relationships with their counterparts in fostering such co-operation (Table 4).

About 50 % of the colleges indicated that at the time of the survey they had direct formal agreements with the department(s) of education. Most of these agreements probably relate to funding and other forms of support. Nine colleges had formal agreements with universities, and eight had similar agreements with technikons (all together 56% of the responding colleges). This linkage with tertiary institutions is in line with the objective that FET institutions should function as crucial bridges in linking learners from diverse learning settings to tertiary education. More than that, knowing that university-community linkage is still a bridge quite far, community colleges in this

instance are a concrete example of how formal education and training institutions can pro-actively link with local structures in the pursuit of societal development.

However, the quality, scope and depth of this collaboration needs to be investigated further from the perspective of how these existing linkages can be further strengthened to support emerging policies on the one hand, and how community college activities and institutional dispositions can assist tertiary institutions engaged in working out university-community linkages for themselves, on the other hand.

Linkage with schools is important because of the opportunities that school leavers can be made aware of. At another level, schools are institutions that have received privileged attention from their respective departments of education in terms of facilities (where these exist). Collaboration with them on the level of resource sharing will help these traditionally inward-looking institutions to see and relate to community development needs, and to learn how to respond to them.

The issue of lateral collaboration, exchange, technical backup and inter-learning among institutions is even more pertinent, as in an average catchment area there are a range of learning institutions consisting of primary schools, secondary schools, technical high schools, technikons, other community colleges and universities.

All in all, it is encouraging to note that the sharing of resources, whether through formal or informal agreements, ranges from programmes to infrastructure and from information technology to recreation. This is a good basis for the government's support strategy for strengthening FET institutions.

2.8 Awareness of policy development and key policy documents

In the survey there was a varied response to the question on awareness of details of policy developments in the country. In a sense, this was not surprising given the fact that in respect of FET in particular, policy, as stated earlier, had been 'running after action'.

The principals at the Bochum and NPCC Colleges in the Northern Province were aware of the existence of the White Paper on FET, the Skills Development Act, the Labour relations Act, the Labour and Equity Bill, and the NQF. However, the staff and the learners interviewed were not clear about the contents of the documents even though some of them had heard about the documents.

The Lovedale College reported that several workshops had been held to boost the college staff's understanding of the government's FET policies. However, it was acknowledged that staff still required much greater exposure to policy developments in creative ways as they might not have the time to read about every technical detail in policy documents.

The Zwelethemba Community College must have scrutinized the FET policy documents closely as they expressed concern about the omission in the FET Green and White Papers of a description of the concept and practice of community colleges. They felt strongly that FET policy should be more serious and concrete about redressing the ills of the past, especially in ways that bring teaching closer to the communities.

The Tsholofelo Community College voiced its concern about the manner in which FET policy completely by-passed the 'community', especially as regards community empowerment through ownership and participation in FET activities. The college believed that the so-called disadvantaged communities had fairly clear ideas about what they wanted, but they needed help to articulate and operationalize these ideas.

The NACWC said its objective was to monitor, implement and offer training in the implementation of the unfolding FET policy.

2.9 Governance

According to the FET Act, 'every public FET institution must establish a council, an academic board, a learner representative council and such other structures as may be determined by the Council'.[29] Of the 30 colleges that returned the survey questionnaires, 76% reported having a governing body. Governing bodies act as guardians, policy ombudsmen and mediators in

internal college management problems. But in view of the larger transformation process in South Africa, the people concerned need training in the specifics of their role and functions, as well as in the broader policy, legal and legislative contexts within which they and the colleges are operating.

'From the Reconstruction and Development Program perspective, training of administrators, educators and managers is an essential element to reach the intended goals for integrating education and training to provide quality learning opportunities for all South Africans. To this end, administrators, educators, and managers for Community Colleges require new skills for implementing this new development. The need for re-orientation and training, new knowledge and skills in running these institutions are crucial to familiarize the practitioners within these institutions with approaches to Community Education.'[30]

Table 5: Term of office ('age') of governing bodies (out of 30)

YEARS IN OFFICE	NUMBER OF COLLEGES
Less than 5 years	16
5-8 years	4
Over 8 years	3
Data not supplied	7

The overall 'age' of the governing boards of the colleges is fairly young as most of them were constituted after 1994, as the following table illustrates.

The age of the governing bodies cautions against drawing summative conclusions about their state. But on another level, the composition of the governing bodies reveals the consideration given to various stakeholders in the broader community. Table (6) gives an idea of the kind of stakeholders currently on college governing bodies. Again it should be emphasized that this is a reflection only of the 30 colleges that returned the questionnaires.

Table 6: Composition of the governing bodies of the Community Colleges (out of 30)

STAKEHOLDER GROUP REPRESENTED	NUMBER OF COLLEGES RESPONDING 'YES'
1. Trustees	5
2. Transformation forum	0
3. Treasury	5
4. College management	27
5. College staff	25
6. College learners	16
7. Members of the community (e.g. elders)	10
8. Reps of commerce/ind/local business	7
9. Members of local govt/municipality	3
10. Training bodies	0
11. Churches	2
12. Legal profession	1
13. Major NGOs or parastatals	3
14. Education department	7
15. Dept of Labour	3
16. Chamber of commerce	0
17. NICE	2
18. Small enterprises	1
19. Organized labour/unions	6
20. Organized agriculture	1
21. Women's organizations	2
22. Parents	4
23. Councillors	4
24. Other groups	1

The governing bodies appear to consist mainly of college management (27 cases) and college staff (16 cases). Representation of external groups is scarce. At the same time, it would not be feasible to include every possible stakeholder group on the governing body. The body would become unwieldy and far too large, and a balance would still have to be found 'in context'. The large number of college members on the governing bodies could blur the line between management and governance, and could give rise to complications in instances where the governing body has for example to take disciplinary action against a member of staff.'

It is encouraging to see that 16 of the 30 colleges (55%) had some form of learner representation on the governing body at the time of the survey, but the nearly 45% vacuum is nevertheless too big. This matter will need to be addressed, as learners are the primary clients of the colleges and are the best placed to represent their interests. Departments of education were represented on some of the governing bodies (seven colleges).

It is interesting to note that only six colleges had representatives of organized labour or trade unions on their governing bodies. This is a long way from the National Department of Education's ideal for further Education and Training which is expressed as follows: 'The establishment of the NBFET (National Board of Further Education and Training) is a central element in the Ministry's strategy for the transformation and reinvigoration of the new FET system. The NBFET will promote innovation, quality, flexibility, and responsiveness, and build consensus between government and its social partners by strengthening the linkages between FET programmes, providers and the workplace.'[31]

The picture to emerge from the field visits, however, provides some useful details and insights as to the local level reality.

The Tsholofelo Community College (North West Province) is controlled and managed by the people of Boitekong through a college governing council. The stakeholders that sit on the governing council include representatives of the local taxi association, churches, community members, educators and

local industries, especially the mines (e.g. Impala and Rustenburg Platinum). The NACWC (Western Cape) is run by a board of trustees composed of well-placed representatives from the private sector, SAQA, the Western Cape Education Department, higher education institutions and community organizations. The trust formulates policy for the NACWC.

The Bochum Community College (Northern Province) boasts a newly appointed college council (the equivalent of a governing board) drawn from various stakeholders in the community and private sector. The members of the council who volunteered to be interviewed during the site visit were forthright, and expressed the need for capacity building for all the councillors in order to help them re-orient themselves to the concept of community colleges, and to establish their rights, obligations and responsibilities in respect of the college and other stakeholders.

At present, Lere-La-Tshepe Community College (Free State) is run by a college council on which a range of stakeholders are represented. These include people with legal and financial backgrounds, representatives from tertiary education institutions, staff and learner representatives.

Council meetings in all the colleges take place on a monthly or quarterly basis. In all the colleges that have councils, the council is regarded as the 'overseer' of the college management (which usually consists of the principal and a deputy where applicable, heads of department, staff and learner representatives). In the Lovedale Community College, the council formulates policy, and determines the application of funds and entry level requirements for learners. In the Bochum Community College, however, the council needs assistance regarding its functions and capacity-building programmes to strengthen and prepare it for the role it is expected to play.

It is encouraging to note that in more than 50% of the colleges, the governing bodies were regarded as having considerable authority in key areas of governance such as finance, appointments, dismissals and the disciplining of staff and learners. In 11 colleges, the governing bodies had total authority in matters relating to finance, while there were fewer governing bodies with

Table 7. Degree of authority of governing bodies (out of 30 colleges)

Level of authority	Finance	Appoint-ments	Disciplining staff	Dismissal of staff	Disciplining learners
Total authority	11	5	5	2	6
Considerable authority	9	14	13	11	11
Some authority	3	2	3	2	5
Little authority	2	4	4	3	2
No authority	0	0	0	7	1
No data	5	5	5	5	5

total authority in respect of appointments and disciplining. However, in the majority of cases (over 60%), the governing bodies appeared to exercise considerable authority over all the crucial aspects of college governance.

2.10 Management

The colleges have numerous committees that support the governing bodies. These committees also provide a crucial support function in terms of day-to-day matters affecting the colleges. The most frequently occurring types of committees were an Examinations Committee (11 colleges reported having one); a Finance Committee (in nine of the colleges); and a Sports and Culture Committee (in eight of the colleges).

There were a whole host of other committees each reported by only one college of the 30 that returned the questionnaires. These were the Out-of-School Youth Project Committee; Languages Committee/Board; Provincial Transformation Forum; Committee of Technical College Principals – CTCP; Rectors Advisory Committee; Grassroots Operations Co-ordinating Committee; Engineering Studies Committee; Commercial (Business) Studies Committee; Workers Committee; In-Service Training Committee; Governing Council Committee; Planning Committee, Timetables Committee; Supervisory Committee, and Housing Committee.

Table 8: Major committees assisting college management

SUPPORTING COMMITTEE	NUMBER OF COLLEGES
Strategic/Executive Committee	3
Finance Committee	8
Sports & Culture Committee	8
Disciplinary Committee	6
Hostel & Residence/Accommodation	2
College Transformation Forum	2
Advisory Committee for Tech. College Exams (ADCOM)	11
Skills Co-ordinating/Workshops Committee	3
Management Committee	4
Learners Affairs (LRC)	3
Examinations Committee	4
Curriculum Committee	2
Development Committee	2
Community Colleges Task Team	3

The significance of these findings is that, potentially, structures do exist which could be strengthened should the need arise.

In terms of the autonomy of the colleges in curriculum and syllabus development, it is clear that they have considerable power in respect of non-formal examinations and non-formal syllabus development. This is not the case with the formal (traditional) subjects, however.

Table 9 shows that scope exists in the community colleges for the introduction of new pedagogical approaches, as there is some latitude in the area of course or programme design, as well as in textbook selection.

Dispute resolution procedures are also in place in the colleges for resolving problems between staff and learners, learners and management, and between staff and management. A number of colleges (18) confirmed their use of these procedures.

From the field visits, the research team was able to glean comments from the principals, teachers and learners about the

Table 9: Degree of autonomy in school development

SCHOOL DEV. ISSUE	NUMBER OF COLLEGES				
	Full	**Some**	**Little**	**None**	**No data**
Formal exams	4	7	3	14	2
Non-formal exams	22	4	–	1	3
Formal syllabus dev.	3	3	9	13	2
Non-formal syll. dev.	19	3	1	3	4
Textbook selection	16	7	3	2	2
Staff promotion	3	7	8	10	2

management style, attitude and general disposition of college management, as well as the attitude and opinion of the staff and learners regarding the management in the particular colleges.

In all the colleges visited, management appeared positively inclined, enthusiastic and in fairly good control. Staff and learner views confirmed that management in the community colleges was generally consultative. The De Aar Community College management (Northern Cape) was enthusiastic about the future of the college although the 'management' at that stage consisted of one person considered by staff and learners alike to have a 'democratic approach'. In the NPCC (Northern Province), the management style was described by all the stakeholders interviewed as being democratic, consultative and inclusive. In the NACWC-Leaf Campus (Western Cape), the 'autocratic management style' attributed to the management by the learners appeared to be linked to the tough stand of management on alcohol and strict class attendance.

At the time of the survey, all the colleges had Management Committees consisting of the principal, senior members of staff and (where available) learner representatives.

2.11 Gender policy

None of the colleges have a gender-desegregated policy. Nevertheless, management and staff expressed sensitivity to gender issues, emphasizing that it would be difficult to deviate from constitutional or national education policies on gender. In some colleges, girls are excluded from certain courses, although a few are beginning to trickle into previously male-dominated courses such as electrical engineering and bricklaying. Some course organizers expressed interest in capacity building to enhance their gender awareness in the new pedagogic environment.

2.12 Institutional and staff development

Teaching staff constitute the single largest item on the education budget in South Africa. When analyzing the data relating to the staff complement in the community college pilot projects, it is important to gain some idea of the number of staff active in the sector, their distribution according to rank, their qualifications, and any other staff development issues that may be of relevance.

According to the information from the survey instruments, most of the colleges employed less than 40 lecturing staff. Only one college had a complement of more than 80 staff members (all males). One college had an all-female staff complement of about 50. Of the 30 colleges, 19 had male principals compared to seven which had female principals. One did not have a principal, and eight did not have vice-principals. Eleven colleges reported not having a financial officer, and two colleges had no administration staff.

In the sites that were visited by the researchers, the average age of the teachers ranged from the late twenties (NPCC, Tsholofelo), to the mid-30s (Lovedale, Bochum, Lera-La-Tshepe Community College), to 40+ (NACWC, Kimberley). The teaching experience ranged from five to 30 years, with strong cadres of experienced staff in the more established institutions (e.g. NACWC, Zwelethemba, Bochum, Kimberley), and those with fewer years, including new recruits, in the other colleges.

Although there was no gender policy at any of the colleges visited, the gender balance among the teaching staff ranged from about 70% female at Lovedale, 60% at Tsholofelo, 50% at the NACWC, Bochum and Kimberley, 35% at the NPCC, to 26% at Lera-La-Tshepe Community College. Except for the Kimberley College and the NACWC, with a 50-50 (black/white) colour mix among the staff, all the other sites had black staff members (i.e 98%-100%).

The position *vis-à-vis qualifications* points to the basic academic development needs of the staff members of the colleges. In the sites visited, the basic qualifications were quite adequate, ranging from M+4, to 3-year diplomas and Bachelor's degrees. Some of the degree-level qualifications can be understood against the background of the colleges, especially the former colleges of education, where a Honours degree was a prerequisite to qualify as a Post Level 2 lecturer.

Regarding security of tenure at the time of the survey, this ranged from colleges with 100 per cent permanent positions (Zwelethemba, the NACWC and Kimberley), to split percentages (the NPCC with 50% permanent, but where even the principal and key management staff were temporary; Bochum with 66% permanent staff, and Lere La-Tshepe Community College with 80% permanent staff).

Table 10: Types of staff development programmes/activities

Activity	Yes	No	In-planning	No data	Total
External workshops	17	–	1	12	30
Attending conferences	18	–	–	12	30
Exchange programmes	6	7	1	16	30
Further study	15	2	–	13	30
International study tours	5	9	–	16	30
National study tours	5	7	–	18	30
Training courses	16	1	–	13	30
Policy dev. w/shops	12	2	2	14	30

However, in colleges like Tsholofelo all the teachers are employed on a temporary basis, and are expected to submit a claim at the end of each month before they get paid. Even then, the payment is not readily or automatically available, creating serious inconveniences in an already fragile situation.

Staff development programmes were apparently under way in 18 of the 30 colleges visited, but the quality of these programmes needs to be looked at more closely. Eleven colleges had no staff development programmes at all.

Despite the apparent range of offerings, very little money is actually available for staff development programmes. According to the data received, only three colleges spent between 11-20 per cent of their budget on staff development. Another 11 spent less than ten per cent, and ten spent less than one per cent on this item. The three colleges that spent such a substantial amount on the staff development should be commended – they should be given the opportunity to share some tips on their strategies with their fellow community colleges.

Very little information was forthcoming on performance-related incentives. Frequently sited 'obstacles' to staff development were financial constraints, time constraints and lack of facilities. INSET needs were repeatedly mentioned as the priority item for staff development.

Table 11 below lists the most important staff needs for 1999/ 2000, as indicated in the responses to the questionnaires.

Staff development, orientation-focused INSET for community colleges, and community service should be matters of great concern also at national level given the importance of the FET sector in the spectrum of national development.

Other needs listed include computer-based teaching, outreach programmes, safety and security, and research skills for staff.

Table 12 shows the broad distribution of lecturing staff's time per week.

Community outreach can take various forms, including direct meetings, interactions, and other forms of involvement that have a bearing on embedding a college in the community within which

Table 11: Key staff priority needs (1999/2000)

TYPE OF NEED	NUMBER OF COLLEGES
INSET courses	18
Better facilities and infrastructure	18
Facilitation and presentation skills	6
Incentives for staff	6
Academic development	5
Moral support for staff	5
Training in unit standards for NQF	4
IT, e-mail and Internet linkage	4
Administrative/Management techniques	4
Training in OBE	3
Financial and management training	3
Training in evaluation/assessment	3
Computer literacy	3
Production of learning materials	3
More staff	3
Curriculum development	3
Networking/Liaison with other colleges	2
Accommodation for staff	2
Job security	2
Conflict management	2
Remedial skills training	2
Recreational facilities	2

Table 12: Staff time utilization: college versus community outreach

Percentage of time	Number of colleges reporting college-based activities	Number of colleges reporting community outreach
0%	–	3
1-20%	–	13
21-40%	–	7
41-60%	2	1
61-80%	9	–
81-100%	15	–
No data	4	6

it is located. Such outreach may be technical in the guise of feasibility studies to map demand as well as learner and community needs. In such a case, it is not relevant how the outreach is done; the effect should be seen in some improvement in active community involvement with the institution.

From Table 12, it appears that although some staff spent time on community outreach activities (between 1-20% of their time per week), the majority of the colleges reported that their main activities were college based most of the time during the week. Three colleges had no outreach involvement of any kind.

2.13 Quality assurance

According to the FET White Paper, a number of concerns were raised about the performance and capacity of the FET sector. It was noted that performance in the FET band was generally poor; that a culture of learning, teaching and service was urgently required; that professional commitment and morale among FET staff was poor; that there was a dearth of managerial skills; and that quality assurance processes were still lacking or seriously deficient.[32]

Data from the survey revealed that most of the colleges implemented annual staff appraisal systems. However, in three colleges the staff were appraised only once every five years, while eight colleges reported that their staff members were never appraised.

Table 13: Frequency of staff appraisal

FREQUENCY	NUMBER OF COLLEGES
Annually	13
Every 2 years	1
Every 5 years	3
Never	8
Data not available	5

Table 14 shows who conducts the staff appraisals (where these occur).

Table 14: Who conducts staff appraisal?

Category	Yes	No	No data	Total
Senior management	17	3	10	30
Immediate superiors	17	3	10	30
Colleagues	8	9	13	30
Learners	4	12	14	30
Broader community	1	14	15	30
Department officials	6	11	13	30
Professional boards	3	12	15	30
Other	3	10	17	30

A wide spectrum of people appear to be involved in appraising staff, whether formally or informally. In most cases, however, it was senior management or lecturers' 'immediate superiors' who were involved. Overall, there was very poor response to this question, possibly because of the uncertainty that surrounds the FET sector as a whole, including the community colleges.

Interviews with college principals and staff during the site visits elicited differing perspectives of quality assurance, monitoring and development.

Lera-Le-Tshepe Community College felt that quality assurance in their training was ensured by the good qualifications of the teaching staff, and the fact that all their courses were nationally accredited. Tsholofelo's main quality assurance mechanism was monitoring of attendance, site inspections and learner assessment. However, they were not quite sure how to participate in the new modules and programmatic arrangements.

In Zwelethemba, it was evident that the college wanted all its courses to be accredited, but there was a general lack of the skills needed to translate unit standards into teachable curri-

cula. Module-based programmes were not yet part of the routine, although modular accreditation standards for apprenticeship training as prescribed by the Metal and Engineering Industries Education and Training Board for welders were being met.

At the Kimberley College all courses are accredited according to SAQA guidelines (i.e. they are official courses on the list of nationally accredited courses). Examination results are monitored as is learner attendance on a daily basis. Regarding the professional staff, quality assurance is ensured through support for the upgrading of staff members' qualifications and ongoing professional development. Staff participated in the development of NQF-related materials by working on an introductory programme to bridge ABET Level 4 with N2. Unfortunately this programme was phased out recently by the National Department of Education.

At the De Aar Community College, trainers are accredited by the Building Training Board.

The Lovedale College ensures the quality of the learners' performance through tests, practical work, projects and short assignments. Attempts have been made to adopt the modular formats as stipulated in the NQF, but this is occurring very slowly. The consensus at this college is that staff development should be enhanced by establishing a Human Resource Development Department at provincial or national level responsible specifically for capacity building.

At the NPCC, recruitment of staff with satisfactory qualifications as well as relevant course accreditation using standards provided by the Department of Education, is the basic quality assurance mechanism. Monitoring and appraisal systems are not yet in place, but day-to-day monitoring of learner attendance takes place through the attendance register. Learners use a monitoring and reportback system to keep management informed about the quality of the teaching and learning taking place in the classrooms. The college, however, feels strongly that further support should be forthcoming from government to link institutions so that ideas on quality assurance can be shared

and so that collaborative strategic planning can be done among colleges not only within one province but, where necessary, across the country.

The NACWC ensures quality assurance through course accreditations and through its collaboration with higher education institutions, for example the University of Cape Town and the Peninsula Technikon. The Leaf Campus of the NACWC, however, reported that they were not using modular formats or output-related approaches; nor did they collaborate with other institutions to generate unit standards as they felt that higher education institutions were not particularly interested in generating unit standards at present.

Table 15: Frequency of evaluation of national and non-national courses

FREQUENCY OF EVALUATION	NO. OF COLLEGES (NATIONAL COURSES)	NO. OF COLLEGES (NON-NAT COURSES)
Annually	12	17
Every 2 years	3	2
More than 2 years	10	1
No data	5	10
TOTAL	30	30

From the above, it appears that the colleges do take the initiative to evaluate national courses on an annual basis. Bi-annual evaluations take place in at least ten of the colleges surveyed. Two possible explanations could be given for this situation. The optimistic one could be that the culture of programme and curricula development may indeed have taken root in the colleges, leading to fairly regular appraisals or evaluations. The other explanation could be that some, or many, colleges are still following fairly predetermined curricula and programmes without question, in which case the regularity of appraisal may be a sign of non-innovation.

The significance of the 'non-national' courses lies in the fact that FET policy requires the involvement of the FET sector in curriculum development in non-national courses as a means of ensuring greater responsiveness to the needs of constituencies such as out-of-school youth, the community and the unemployed. Only four colleges reported extensive involvement in curriculum development in non-national courses to date. Eighteen colleges said they were contemplating involvement, while six reported they were not involved at all.

The colleges were asked about the involvement of business and industry in curriculum development, as FET policy holds that business and industry involvement may be essential as most of the learners from the colleges end up in jobs in the labour market. The following was the response.

Table 16: Involvement of business and industry in curriculum development

	A great deal	A little	Not at all	No data	Total
Course design	4	11	12	3	30
Course evaluation	2	9	15	4	30
Learner evaluation	1	7	19	3	30
Staff evaluation	1	6	20	3	30

Nearly 50% of the colleges indicated that they did not involve business in course evaluation. According to the data it was rather senior management, senior lecturers and lectures who were mainly involved in curriculum development. However, at least 20 colleges indicated that they carried out some market research or needs analyses before introducing new courses.

It is also important for college staff members to become involved in national curriculum development efforts. The colleges were consequently asked to indicate the extent of their involvement in national framework and syllabus committees.

It emerged that most staff members in the colleges were not involved in national endeavours in this regard (16 responded negatively in the area of engineering, 16 in business studies, 21 in agriculture, 20 in the arts, and 19 in the social sciences). At the same time, it was recorded that there was insufficient expertise in developing unit standards at college level.

This reveals a chicken-and-egg capacity gap that needs to be addressed urgently.

With regard to *external examiners*, there were no such examiners in the majority of the colleges surveyed (22 out of 30). Only five reported using external examiners. Given the proximity of, and in some cases the agreements between, the colleges and universities or technikons, it is all the more pertinent that the expertise at these institutions should be better utilized. Current FET policy explicitly proposes assessment in FET institutions as a primary responsibility of institutions within the guidelines of approved curricula, outcomes and quality assurance.

The introduction of the NQF, as spelt out in the South African Qualifications Authority Act of 1996, the implementation of an outcomes-based approach to education and training, and the shift in learning and teaching frameworks from content-driven to outcomes and programme-oriented models, provide the background against which colleges can design their curricula.

In terms of the modularization of the curriculum, one of the key policy requirements is that colleges should comply with the NQF (which requires the offering of courses in modular form). According to the survey, only nine of the colleges have so far introduced modular courses. Fourteen are in the process of introducing this form of course and five colleges have not begun at all with the process.

With regard to the outcomes-based approach, 12 colleges reported some action in designing their curricula around this approach. Another 12 said they were endeavouring to institute the process. Three colleges were not involved at all.

The NPCC was very pointed about the problem of mindset in relation to the transformation and/or amalgamation of the

colleges. It was stated that because FET policy 'followed action', there was no proper organogram to guide the implementation of the mergers. This identity crisis, when added to weak security of tenure, leads to anxiety and may be a contributing factor in the lack of enthusiasm among some staff as to their future.

It was also pointed out by several colleges that the restructuring that had led to the formation of the community colleges had brought lecturers and tutors from previously specialized institutions into contact with a much broader range of demands from the community. Their staff's re-orientation or INSET needs had not been taken into account when the restructuring was done. Some of the lecturers from technical colleges had now to face adult and illiterate members of the community and to co-operate and engage with local communities. This posed challenges at personal and professional levels.

A need for gender-sensitive training (capacity development for staff) was expressed by the Kimberley College as it had female learners participating for the first time in fields such as bricklaying.

The NPCC expressed concern about the issue of temporary staff and the long-term impact on performance/delivery.

In general, there were no performance-related incentives at the colleges, and staff undertook their own study programmes.

Lere-La-Tshepe Community College and the NACWC (Leaf Campus) reported that staff induction took place on an informal basis, and that staff development often involved overseas tours and collaboration with other institutions. The NACWC Leaf Campus reported a bonus system as a reward mechanism and added that it had been offered a Fullbright Scholarship for one person to attend the Highline Community College in Washington, USA, for two months. The NACWC also gave each educator the equivalent of R2 000 a year towards staff development (e.g. course and workshop attendance but not conferences staff feel that conferences should be included in this allocation).

Lere-La-Tshepe Community College reported that it had budgeted for staff development.

2.14 Learners

Learner profiles, entry qualifications and prior experience

At the time of the survey the average age of the learners at the colleges was the mid-20s and they were mostly black. The mother tongue of the majority of the learners reflected the linguistic profile of the particular community (e.g. Xhosa and some Sotho at the Leaf Campus of the NACWC; English, Afrikaans and Setswana for the multilingual community around Kimberley, and Northern Sotho in the NPCC.

A *catchment area* refers to the source of clientele and it reflects responsiveness to local contexts. 'Catchment area' usually refers to a geographical area surrounding a college. Thus in Kimberley, the catchment area is the local township, although some of the learners come from as far as Kuruman (280 km distant) and Pampierstad (100 km distant). The Kimberley College's boarding facilities have been shut down due to lack of funds, placing in jeopardy any prospects of supporting learners' access oportunities. The NPCC's principal catchment area is within a 15-45 km radius of the college. The NACWC has a national reach, with learners coming in from the Eastern Cape, the Northern Province and the Western Cape, although Cape Town is already well served and is therefore not part of its 'catchment area'. The Zwelethemba Community College (in the Eastern Cape) serves its local community although some learners come from Transkei.

The community college idea emphasizes *flexibility and broadened access*. The colleges visited had two types of learners. Some colleges focused on traditional entry qualifications (they thus adhered to traditional criteria), and some were more flexible with regard to admissions criteria.

At the Kimberley and De Aar Colleges, the learners range from the jobless and the illiterate (who are given basic training in building, metalwork, plumbing, needlework, garment manufacturing and knitting), to learners with Grade 9 (admitted to N1-level training courses in basic trades, computer courses and business skills courses). Then there are school leavers who are

admitted to accredited N4-level courses. These courses continue to N6 level. In both colleges, very few learners fall in these upper levels. This reflects the community responsiveness and applied community empowerment orientation of the colleges.

At the NPCC, the learners have a mixture of experiences ranging from being unemployed to doing formal and informal work in the community. Learners with formal qualifications are admitted, but there is no age restriction, which is also in line with the flexibility objective of community colleges.

The NACWC's learners generally have matric or formal work experience. This represents a rather rigid cut-off as an entry requirement, although it may be understandable given the consortium's priority on interfacing with higher education institutions.

Entrance qualifications are an important exclusionary factor that is pertinent to any evaluation of a college's practice.

From the sites visited, it was evident that entrance qualifications differed between the colleges.

The NPCC accepts learners with grade 9 or proven prior experience. This varies according to programme type. Skills training ranges from N1 to N6. The Lovedale College also regards prior learning or proven experience in a relevant area as a key entrance factor. These factors are assessed on site prior to admission. The Zwelethemba Community College is flexible in that it takes into account prior learning, experience and interest.

The Kimberley College, too, has learners ranging from advanced learners in business skills right down to illiterate, jobless people from the streets who are trained in technical skills that can empower them to generate income. Kimberley has Grade 9 (Standard 7) as an admission qualification for N1 courses. Learners with Grade 12 (Standard 10) are admitted to N4-level programmes. However, in respect of basic skills training and basic literacy programmes, jobless, illiterate adults and street children are admitted without qualifications.

The NACWC admits only learners with matric.

A learner organization is crucial for ensuring democratic practices and transparency in management style. It is also a key factor in the articulation of learners' views on the running of college affairs.

According to the survey, 29 colleges had a learner representative body of one kind or another. However, only 16 of the colleges indicated that learners participated in college governance.

It is clear that the new democratic dispensation has impacted at college level, as reflected in the number of SRCs that were created in the post-1996 period. However, this outburst of democratic activity has not seen an improvement in female participation in learner activities at the leadership level.

Table 17: Year of establishment of the SRC

YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT	NUMBER OF COLLEGES
Before 1979	1
Between 1980-1985	4
Between 1986-1990	3
Between 1991-1995	9
Between 1996-1999	12
Data not supplied	1

At the colleges visited, learner movements or organizations differed in their degree of organization. At the NPCC, there is SASCO, and the beginnings of AZASCU. The Bochum Community College has no learner movement on its campus. NACWC Leaf Campus has religious organizations such as the University Anglican Society and His People. The Kimberley College once had a very active learner movement (SASCO) which appears to have 'calmed down' significantly. The reason for this did not emerge during the interview. What is now active on campus is a Christian Learners' Association. Except for the Christian Learners' Organization (SCO), Lere-La-Tshepe Community College also appeared to have an inactive learner movement, and

the learners showed little interest in any organized activity, even on probing by the researchers. At the Lovedale College, management said they would actually like to see more learner activity.

Learner recruitment and support strategies vary according to institution. These range from a prospectus and yearbook (the NPCC, Zwelethemba, the NACWC, Lere-La-Tshepe), to advertisements in brochures and local newspapers, on radio and by word of mouth (Lovedale, Bochum, Tsholofelo).

At the NPCC, learners with some form of prior experience undergo a placement test to identify areas of interest. About 50% of the applicants are turned away each year due to lack of space; some are redirected to other colleges in and around Pietersburg. This indicates the high demand for education and training in the area. In terms of support services, there are bridging courses and a job placement service, but other support services such as transport, bursaries and psychological counselling are not yet in place. The college does, however, have boarding facilities for some of its learners for which a very modest fee is charged.

A syndrome that is often misrepresented as 'dropout' was noted at the NPCC, but the explanation may simply be that learners were absorbed by industry or the labour market before they completed their courses. This is a perceptive observation on the part of the college.

Counselling is available at Lere-La-Tshepe Community College. Other support services include career guidance, academic development (study methods), enrichment and bridging courses (resource-based learning). Bursaries are available from RDP funds and are linked to specific courses such as ASECA, business studies and resource-based learning.

Counselling (including psychological), career guidance, academic development and bursaries are offered at the NACWC. However, much of the counselling and career guidance revolves around switching of courses between technikon and university streams. The holders of matriculation certificates who qualify are redirected to other technical colleges or institutions within the NACWC. Bursaries to the tune of R1 000 are offered by the Rotary Club to the poorest learners. De Beers provides bursaries

for the top three learners in a number of partner institutions of the NACWC. Psychological counselling to counter substance abuse or poor self-image is also offered together with tutorial support at residences (cf. interview at Leaf Campus).

The Tsholofelo Community College offers career guidance, counselling, enrichment and bridging courses. A number of bursaries are offered to the most needy learners. The Lovedale College also offers career guidance, counselling, enrichment and bridging courses, but there is no learner support in the form of job placement, transport or bursaries. A similar situation obtains at the Bochum Community College.

Although there is no injunction from the MEC for Education in the Eastern Cape that no learner should be turned away, the great demand for admission at the Zwelethemba Community College has necessitated the redirection of learners to other neighbouring colleges within the province. In the college itself, there is very little in the way of either enrichment or bridging courses owing to financial constraints. Neither is there career guidance, counselling, transport or bursaries.

Although a counsellor is available at the Kimberley College, there is no transport assistance or accommodation for learners. Lere-La-Tshepe Community College has a good guidance facility which it intends making available to other educational institutions as well.

2.15 Learning programmes

Most of the colleges aspire to a mix of practical and theoretical subjects. In some colleges, such as Tsholofelo, all the courses were initiated by the community.

In terms of learner choices, the most popular courses are those that are perceived to lead to jobs as quickly as possible. Such courses include marketing management, engineering, business studies, tourism, motor mechanics, early childhood development and the electrical trade. Courses that have potential for self-employment (e.g. knitting, garment making and bricklaying) are also favoured by the learners.

Most of the colleges did not experience any problem in initiating a course and getting it approved by the department concerned. The experience of the NPCC and Lere-La-Tshepe Community College is that an average course takes about a year to develop, get approved and implement. Informal courses requested by industry and other stakeholders normally take about half a year. On of the above colleges was concerned about its high failure rate: 65% failure for business studies and 70% for a computer systems course (matric finishing). However, on assessment, it was found that the course had been pitched too high for the particular learners. It was at first-year degree level, which was too difficult for learners who had completed a weak matric in the first place.

Similar problems were experienced at the Kimberley College where a high failure rate was experienced at N2 and N3 levels. A course in business practice had to be abandoned and replaced with a course in economics. This demonstrates that the colleges can use flexible criteria to abandon a course should its usefulness appear dubious. All course programmes at the Kimberley College are accredited, and community need is a key factor in course selection. Eighty per cent of the NPCC's courses are accredited, while the figure for the Bochum Community College is 100%.

The table below shows enrolment per subject area at the 30 colleges that returned the questionnaires.

The response to the question of learner enrolment was generally poor. For reasons that were not specified, most of the colleges did not supply adequate information to enable better analysis.

Nevertheless, from what was received, it appears that there is increasing participation by females in the engineering field, while greater numbers of male learners are entering the business studies field, which was traditionally a 'female domain'. It was felt that the introduction of information technology, the growing use of computers and attractive job opportunities in the business studies field all played a role in this shift.

Agriculture has a very poor enrolment overall at the colleges, indicating a negative correlation between the rural location of

some of the colleges and agriculture as a subject. The same applies to the arts and the utility subjects.

Table 18: Learner enrolment 1999 (science subjects)

No. of learners	Engineer.		Business studies		Agric.	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
0-99	8	15	15	5	4	4
100-249	4	1	7	12	0	0
250-449	4	1	0	4	0	0
450-749	0	0	0	1	0	0
750-999	1	0	1	0	0	0
1 000+	0	0	0	0	0	0
No data	13	13	8	8	26	26
Tot. coll.	30	30	30	30	30	30

Table 19: Learner enrolment 1999 (arts & social sciences)

No. of learners	Arts		Social sciences		Utility studies	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
0-99	5	5	1	5	9	7
100-249	-	-	3	1	0	3
250-449	0	0	1	0	3	1
450-749	0	0	0	0	0	0
750-999	0	0	0	0	0	0
1000+	0	0	0	0	0	1
No data	25	25	24	24	18	18
Tot. coll.	30	30	30	30	30	30

2.16 Education management information systems (EMIS)

EMIS was considered important at all the colleges, but the basic infrastructure was still lacking. Some of the colleges (18)

reported using computer-based information, while 12 reported non-use of such information. Five colleges reported that their computer information systems had been installed prior to 1994, while 12 stated that they had received their systems after 1994.

A close audit of the state of the computer equipment, and the nature of EMIS, at colleges should be carried out with a view to providing efficient management systems and networking through the Internet.

Eleven of the 30 colleges indicated that they were linked to the Internet the expansion of this service should not pose major problems as most of the colleges possess computer equipment.

2.17 Finance

Of the 30 colleges surveyed, 29 were state-aided or funded. Only one was private. More than half of the colleges had a budget of one million rands or less; while six indicated that their budget was between 1-2,5 million rands. Four colleges had a budget of over 2,5 million rands. These figures appear unrealistic given obvious overheads such as staff salaries, rates and taxes, and expenditure on overall maintenance and teaching/learning materials. Such overheads, often paid by the state, might not have been included in the budget figures.

A clearer understanding of budgetary processes and interpretation is a genuine capacity need at many of the colleges.

Table 20: Grants received from commerce and industry (out of 30 colleges)

AMOUNT IN RANDS	NUMBER OF COLLEGES
0-10 000	5
10 000-100 000	7
100 000-500 000	6
500 000+	0
Data not supplied	12

Regarding grants from the private sector (commerce and industry), the following responses were received.

With regard to state bursaries, the figure was very low indeed. Fourteen of the 30 colleges had learners with no state bursaries whatsoever. At five colleges, 19% of the learners received bursaries, while in at least four colleges, bursary levels ranged from 70% to 100%. The basis for these figures is not clear, and could not be extrapolated from the survey information.

A total of 57% of the colleges published annual statements of income and expenditure, while 33% did not do so. The colleges were also asked who determined the fees for non-national courses. Two colleges mentioned the Department of Education, while 24 colleges said they themselves determined the fees. This points to a strong sense of college-level autonomy in this regard.

However, apart from these fees, other levies were also charged to the learners by different institutions. The list includes indemnity fees, SRC fees, learner affairs fees, learner card fees, damage levy, key deposits, project fees, a college fund and examination fees per subject.

During the site visits, the colleges were also asked about the process of acquiring financial resources from government. In most of the colleges the procedure was that the college made the estimates and the Department of Education approved or rejected them, and on the basis of this decision the colleges adjusted their operations.

Most of the colleges reported the existence of contingency funds (ranging from R10 000 to R80 000) in their kitties. Some colleges like Kimberley and De Aar were fully financed by the Department of Education as technical colleges.

There seems to be no serious learner debt problem at most of the colleges; user fees (community contribution) remain a substantial factor in the survival of the colleges. At the NPCC, a user fee of R1 200 a year is charged for national courses, and R2 400 for non-national courses. A sum of approximately R3,5 million annually is derived from community sources. The college has no

direct links with any international donor or international institution.

In the case of the NACWC, partner institutions draw up a budget and present it to the NACWC – the the trustees then accept or reject the budget. This unusual financial arrangement is due to the fact that the consortium receives substantial financing from an external donor agency (DANIDA). A fee of R2 000 a year is nevertheless still charged (this varies according to a particular learner's capacity to pay. Usually only about 2% of the learners end up paying the full amount). Every learner receives a R7 500 grant from the Western Cape Education Department. On average about 15% of the learners don't pay at all for their studies.

Although donations are received from the private sector, especially from the mines and industry in the form of machinery, donations in cash and bursaries, there is a general feeling that fund raising for specific college-based initiatives should be geared up from the national and provincial levels.

2.18 Physical infrastructure/facilities

As is indicated in Table 21, only a few of the colleges surveyed lacked the basic minimum infrastructure; it was not possible to determine the precise state of the infrastructure during the research.

Twenty-three of the colleges had perimeter fencing and 20 had security guards. Twenty-five of the colleges had computer-training centres (or rooms). However, only six of the colleges had facilities for the disabled on campus, and only 17 had workshops. About a third of the colleges lacked libraries, auditoriums, boardrooms and staff rooms. There was some form or other of staff accommodation in 14 of the colleges, and learner residences were available in 19 of the colleges surveyed. Book-shops were lacking in the majority of the cases.

The following observations were recorded by our researchers when they visited the campuses:

The Kimberley College campus is described as neat, properly fenced, with sufficient classrooms and workshops, good roofing construction, and with natural light by day and electric lighting by night. A former metal workshop serves as a sewing centre where trainees are allowed to do private work after hours. Sports facilities are available at a nearby teacher-training college. De Aar is described as being too small to be a college on its own. The workshops are cramped and teaching takes place in an open space which may previously have been a netball field. There are neither sports/recreational nor residential facilities for learners on the campus.

The Lovedale College consists of old structures built many years ago when the college was first established. Few new buildings have been added. Security looks good, with ten properly trained security personnel manning the premises 24 hours a day. There are eight classrooms in the administration block, of which one is used for the Recovery Programme. A separate block houses the garment manufacturing/sewing centre. A separate facility contains the computer laboratory with 33 computers, a centre for drama and the Lovedale Community College Research Unit. The counselling and guidance unit comprises five staff offices and the music centre. The administration block consists of the rector's office, a staff room, a boardroom and seven staff offices. There are eight houses for staff accommodation, only three of which are habitable. There are two hostels for the boys, one of which has been declared unsuitable for human habitation. The girls are accommodated in a separate dormitory that is much bigger than that of the boys. There are sports facilities on the premises (including a football field, a netball court, a rugby pitch and a gymnasium). There are also two halls, a cafeteria and a youth clubhouse.

The Zwelethemba Community College is small but has modern architecture. There are three computer laboratories (two of which have Pentium computers). Each of the computer laboratories has one printer for every four learners. One of the laboratories has 27 workstations with a total of 15 printers attached. There is a plumbing workshop; a classroom for the orientation course; and a workshop each for electronics,

bricklaying, motor mechanics and panelbeating/spraying. There are two electrical workshops for the community and two carpentry facilities. There is a machine shop containing two welding workshops and 20 classrooms. There is an office each for the senior lecturer, accounts clerk, senior administrator and senior commercial lecturer, as well as a staff room and board-room. There are no sports of recreational facilities, hence the learners have to use the facilities at the Griffiths Mxenge College.

Tsholofelo is described as neat, attractive and low-maintenance college with durable and well-kept structures. The facilities are well utilized, and are serving increasingly large numbers of learners owing to the community ownership of the college. The school hall is used by community members during weekends for activities such as weddings, meetings, concerts and church gatherings.

There are five offices which are described as too small and inadequate for all the staff members. The principal is obliged to use the caretaker's living room as his office. The local municipality recently donated a piece of land to the college, part of which has been earmarked for sports activities. At present the college has only one netball court and one soccer field. The library is open only to learners as there is no full-time librarian. In total, the college has 14 classrooms, a library, a hall, a computer room, two workshops for metalwork and bricklaying respectively, a home economics centre, and a cafeteria. It was not possible for the researchers to visit the satellite campuses during the survey period due to time constraints.

The NACWC Leaf Campus is only one of the linkage partners of the National Access Consortium. The security at Leaf is good, with perimeter fencing and security personnel. It has access for the disabled, and computer rooms with 486 Mhz computers. The college has a media centre, a hall, a staff room, and individual offices for the administration staff and principal. There is accommodation for staff and learners, as well as an SRC office, a swimming pool and a tennis court. The general appearance of the college is described as tidy and pleasant, with well-maintained gardens.

Lere-La-Tshepe has good-quality infrastructure with adequate security provided by a private firm. There is no access for the disabled as classes are held in a three-storey building. There are hostels for staff and learners, but no sports facilities, canteens or bookshop. The transition to a community college appears to have been well handled in terms of the college's vision, although the curriculum seems still to be identical to that of ordinary technical colleges.

The NPCC has secure perimeter fencing and extensive campus grounds on which several additional college structures have been erected. The main administration block is modern, tidy and well maintained. Two large halls are under construction for use in the technical courses. There are several workshops for the different subject fields: sewing, knitting, garment manufacturing, bricklaying, electronics, motor mechanics, etc. There are also three computer rooms with sufficient printers. Hostels for learners are available, as is a canteen.

Cross-cutting challenges referred to included introducing computerized EMIS; enhancing staff development and promotion; developing new formal courses in line with community requirements; better strategies for identifying community needs; initiating tracer studies; training in developing relevant to curriculum and unit standards; promoting partnerships with other education and training institutions on the one hand, and with business and industry on the other.

Table 21: Physical audit of colleges

MAIN FACILITY	DETAILS OF FACILITY	NO. COLL.WITH FACILITY
SECURITY	Perimeter fences	23
	Alarm	13
	Security personnel	20
DISABLED ACCESS		6
WORKSHOPS		17
COMPUTER ROOMS		25
COMPUTERS	286	6
	386	7
	486	13
	Pentium	18
MEDIA CENTRE/LIBRARY		17
HALL/AUDITORIUM		18
LECTURER / STAFFROOM		21
BOARDROOM		10
OFFICES	Individual (e.g. hds of depts)	23
	Administrative	27
RESIDENCES	Staff	14
	Learner	19
CANTEEN		11
BOOKSHOP		8
SRC OFFICES		19
SPORT FACILITIES	Football	19
	Cricket	0
	Tennis	8
	Netball	18
	Hockey	1
	Swimming	6
	Gymnasium	2
ABLUTION FOR STAFF	Female/Male	28
ABLUTION FOR LEARNERS	Female/Male	28

Table 22: SWOT analysis of sites visited

COLLEGE	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	INNOVATIONS
KIMBERLEY	*strong community support, *good facilities well-constructed buildings *competent staff - representative of all race groups	*DoE funding cycle is inadequate *inadequate market research support is needed to help the college determine employment opportunities	*unemployment projects that bring in learners from the community	funding	
NPCC	*FET policy is an asset *pride in relevance of courses *existence of governance structures (e.g council)	*security of tenure for staff including management *college infrastructure inadequate *absence of formal appraisal systems *lack of financial support for learners	*interaction with communities *partnership with business community	*shortage of staff *funding *acting status of college rectorship *lack of proactive DoE involvement and strategic support	**integration of the two colleges* **introduction of programmes that are responsive to community needs* **creation of satellite campusses*
Lere-La-Tshepe	*qualified staff *no problem of funding cycle with DoE	*poor location of college *too small a management team (3 only)	*link with business	funding	*the new computer centre*
NACWC Leaf (only)	*understanding the needs of learners *commitment of staff *integration of subjects *democratic functioning of college	*day learners have inadequate time on campus *difficulty with screening financially needy learners *inadequate residences	*offering programme packages to business	*funding *tension between HE and FET staff	

Table 22 Continued

Tsholofelo	*community- based nature of college *community involvement and participation *contribution from private sector *strong high calibre board *opportunities to work with people from squatter settlements	*principal feels he needs to pass on management to someone else soon *•private• college means inability to attract stable salaried staff *not as many learners as would have wished	*learning experience of working in a community institution *learning opportunity in working with and learning accreditation process *links with business *potential merger with other colleges	*funding *inconsistency of DoE in paying salaries of staff *insecurity of tenure among staff	*college nominated for Presidential Award *college won the North West Premier Award *college offers education with production courses are accredited *learners meet training board requirements *learners able to set up own small business *ECD courses *tourism
Zwelethemba	* the pride of the provincial DoE *high motivation of staff *use of mother tongue by staff as teaching aid *increasing enrolment (high demand) *well-equipped facilities *relationship with community	*unable to attain 100% pass rate *inability to offer adequate boarding facilities for learners *not all courses are nationally accredited *inadequate management skills *lack of security *low staff qualifications (N2 level staff teaching N2 level learners)	*involvement in FET policy development and implementation	*funding *competition from traditional technical colleges *inadequate security on campus *insdequate staff re-orientation to the community college idea *vandalization	*effort to alter mindset of staff *building rapport with community *setting up of satellite campuses in rural areas *accreditation of courses from training boards
Lovedale	*deepened understanding of CC concept *openness to new ideas *strong team spirit *staff conviction about the need for transformation *good relationship with DoE (though this depends on whom you contact)	*short programmes do not contribute to deeper learning *artificial oversupply (over-demand) in some courses *condition of some of the buildings *lack of transport to and from college	*college is a famous tourist attraction (because of its history)	*funding *•fly-by- night• computer schools that are mushrooming around Alice	*establishment of a research unit *use of satellite- based education (Fort Cox) *winning support from communities

PART THREE: Conclusions and recommendations

This research set out to determine the state of thinking, practice and restructuring in the community college pilot projects being funded by the government.

By way of conclusion, the following can be said:

This research confirms that in most of the colleges there is a new mobilization spirit and sense of identity that binds the restructured colleges together beyond the legislative pronouncement. These colleges represent potentially powerful community, social development and human resource development institutions endeavouring to innovate at the local level with the scarce resources at their disposal. Their contribution to the fulfilment of the ideals of FET institutions as stated in FET policy should not be ignored.

That the colleges are in no doubt as to their new mission which is to ensure access to education and training to previously disadvantaged communities, and to cultivate community responsiveness and community empowerment. Many of the colleges have outdone themselves in this regard, setting precedents for responsibility to communities that would have been hard to imagine under the previousdispensation. These institutions need recognition and explicit signals from the DoE that they are doing something good, something relevant, and something pertinent to the core objectives of FET policy.

That there are gaps in understanding the unfolding policy processes (which is not strange, given the complexity of some of the policy contents such as the NQF). Moreover, the unfolding FET policy is 'running after action'. Policy should not run over everything in its path; rather, it should

recognize what is going on, support it as far as possible, and let itself become a tool for community and local-level empowerment, as well as for overall growth and development.

That the colleges have taken very seriously the challenge of building partnerships with the local community, with business and with fellow colleges. Such links should be strengthened and, where possible, further facilitated by the National and Provincial Departments of Education.

Needs identified during the visits included the following:

- *capacity building in governance and management.* This includes capacity building intra-college, across colleges, and within college clusters or satellite arrangements. The colleges need systematic support as they contemplate new possibilities for the efficient use of resources and programme sharing.
- *capacity building in programme development and accreditation.* Specialized institutions should be commissioned to work in a systematic, consistent manner as policy unfolds. Isolated one-day workshops on the NQF are not sufficient.
- *funding.* This relates to the need for greater efficiency in the way the funding cycle is managed at present, which in some instances works to depress rather than support innovation. One college did not have the necessary competency to draw up a proper budget, which led to organizational paralysis as the budgetary submissions always contained one fault or another.
- *standardized quality assurance and appraisal mechanisms.* Such mechanisms are required to guide the work of the college councils and management.
- *advocacy for community colleges.* This needs to take on a new beat altogether, possibly with annual symposia or colloquia bringing together practitioners, policy makers and researchers to reflect on strategy building. An international dimension could also be added to this.

- *facilitation of partnerships.* This should be taken up at national and provincial levels, and factored actively into policy implementation strategies. The colleges need assistance in a coherent manner, especially in their endeavour to obtain support from funders and big business. This could take place explicitly for the community colleges, or within FET, but with a clear reference to community colleges as an organic player in the FET domain.
- *partnership building for technical support from overseas.* This should be looked into in a way that can strengthen the colleges in terms of the delivery of the requisite new pedagogy of **community education.** This implies a study of the methodologies, programme organization and strategies this institutional form has adopted worldwide. It also implies the identification of those experiences that can be instructive for this subsector of FET in South Africa.

Further information and knowledge needs to be generated as the process of FET policy implementation gets under way. In the community college sector, some of these areas requiring further exploration are:

- the community-labour market interface. This can take the form of tracer studies to track and monitor how the graduates are faring in the 'wild west' of the real world.
- community colleges and their links with higher education modes of collaboration.
- community college links with local communities methods methods, strategies and pay-offs.
- quality assurance, assessment and accreditation needs.
- resource mobilization at local level (community-based funding).
- the new institutional forums (NIFs such as the National Access Consortium of the Western Cape), in order to determine their multiplier value for the whole community college sector.
- staff development models.

The education management information system needs of the community college sector. The community college movement

needs to identify an institution or institutions that can develop programmes for community education as a pedagogical approach. The best centre for this purpose would be the Vista Centre for Community Education which, apart from running community programmes, also conducts Master's level courses on cognitive empowerment. This could be factored in through NICE.

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The community college concept is relatively new in South Africa although well established in other countries. It offers an alternative institutional form of education and training that caters for a wide range of clientele. This might include the out of school youth, the unemployed, ABET learners, secondary as well as post secondary learners, rural communities, and women.

During 1998/1999 the Human Sciences Research Council conducted Phase One of a two year study. The aim of the study was to monitor the implementation of further education and training (FET) policy in South Africa, with special reference to community college pilot projects. Thus an attempt to establish the state of thinking, praxis, partnerships, reprogramming, restructuring and needs of community college pilot projects was at the core of the project.

The publication captures the major findings of Phase One, while also feeding into Phase Two of the project - the findings of which are featured in a separate publication.

The key partners in this project are the National Department of Education, the National Institute for Community Education, and the Royal Netherlands Government through its embassy in Pretoria, who also funded the project.

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